

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communication support apparatus comprising:  
an acquisition unit configured to acquire source-  
language information represented in a first language;

5        a first determination unit configured to determine  
a level of importance of the source-language  
information;

         a setting unit configured to set, based on the  
level of importance, an accuracy of translation with  
10        which the source-language information is translated  
into corresponding language information represented in  
a second language; and

         a translation unit configured to translate the  
source-language information into the corresponding  
15        language information with the accuracy.

2. The communication support apparatus according  
to claim 1, wherein the setting unit sets the accuracy  
of translation based on a level of emergency as the  
level of importance.

20        3. The communication support apparatus according  
to claim 2, further comprising:

         a providing unit configured to provide stimulation  
to a user if the level of importance is higher than a  
threshold value;

25        a stimulation determination unit configured to  
determine whether or not the user confirms the  
stimulation;

an interruption unit configured to interrupt providing of the stimulation if the stimulation determination unit determines that the user confirms the stimulation; and

5           an increasing unit configured to increase the stimulation if the stimulation determination unit determines that the user fails to confirm the stimulation.

4. The communication support apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the providing unit is configured to provide, as the stimulation, at least one of light stimulation, sound stimulation, physical stimulation caused by a physical movement, and electrical stimulation.

15           5. A communication support apparatus comprising:  
          an acquisition unit configured to acquire source-language information represented in a first language;  
          a first determination unit configured to determine a level of importance of the source-language  
20           information;

          a translation unit configured to translate the source-language information into corresponding language information represented in a second language;

          an exhibit unit configured to exhibit the  
25           corresponding language information;

          a setting unit configured to set, based on the level of importance, a process accuracy with which at

least one of an acquisition process to be carried out by the acquisition unit, a translation process to be carried out by the translation unit, and an exhibit process to be carried out by the exhibit unit is

5 performed; and

an execution unit configured to execute at least one of the acquisition process, the translation process and the exhibit process with the process accuracy.

6. The communication support apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the first determination unit  
10 comprises:

a first storage which stores important keywords of the first language; and

a comparison unit configured to compare the  
15 source-language information with the important keywords.

7. The communication support apparatus according to claim 6, wherein:

the first storage further stores a score  
20 corresponding to each important keyword; and

the comparison unit extracts each compared important keyword and the score corresponding to each compared important keyword, and determines the level of importance based on the score.

8. The communication support apparatus according to claim 5, wherein:

the setting unit sets, for the translation

process, a high accuracy mode in which a high accuracy translation is performed, if the level of importance is higher than a threshold value, and a high speed mode in which a high speed translation is performed, if the  
5 level of importance is not higher than the threshold value.

9. The communication support apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the setting unit changes, in accordance with a set one of the high accuracy mode and  
10 the high speed mode, at least one of the number of candidates of expressions of the second language used to determine which one of the expressions corresponds to an expression contained in the source-language information, a range in a dictionary used for  
15 translating the source-language information into the corresponding language information, an available memory capacity, a process time required for the translation process, a process speed at which the translation process is performed.

20 10. The communication support apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the comparison unit determines the level of importance based on a sum of scores corresponding to the important keywords contained in the source-language information.

25 11. The communication support apparatus according to claim 6, wherein:

the first determination unit further comprises

a second storage which stores similar keywords similar to the important keywords of the first language; and

the comparison unit compares the source-language information with the similar keywords.

5           12. The communication support apparatus according to claim 11, wherein:

the second storage further stores similarities corresponding to the similar keywords; and

10           the comparison unit extracts compared similar keywords and the similarities corresponding to the compared similar keywords, and determines the level of importance based on the similarities.

13. The communication support apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the setting unit sets a high  
15 accuracy mode for a high accuracy translation, if at least one of each score and each similarity is higher than a threshold value.

14. The communication support apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising:

20           a providing unit configured to provide stimulation to a user if the level of importance is higher than a threshold value;

25           a stimulation determination unit configured to determine whether or not the user confirms the stimulation;

an interruption unit configured to interrupt providing of the stimulation if the stimulation

determination unit determines that the user confirms the stimulation; and

an increasing unit configured to increase the stimulation if the stimulation determination unit determines that the user fails to confirm the stimulation.

15. The communication support apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the providing unit is configured to provide, as the stimulation, at least one of light stimulation, sound stimulation, physical stimulation caused by a physical movement, and electrical stimulation.

16. The communication support apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a rhythm analysis unit configured to analyze a rhythm of acquired source-language information, and wherein the first determination unit determines the level of importance based on the rhythm.

17. The communication support apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the first determination unit comprises a detection unit configured to detect a level of tension of a user, and a second determination unit which determines the level of importance based on the level of tension.

18. The communication support apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the rhythm analysis unit analyzes the rhythm which includes at least one of

an intonation, a pitch, power, a pause position,  
a pause length, an accent position, an utterance-  
continued period, an utterance interval and an  
utterance speed.

5           19. The communication support apparatus according  
to claim 5, further comprising a living body analysis  
unit configured to analyze living body information of a  
user if the source-language information is acquired,  
and the first determination unit determines the level  
10 of importance based on the living body information.

          20. The communication support apparatus according  
to claim 19, wherein the first determination unit  
comprises a detection unit configured to detect a level  
of tension of a user based on the living body  
15 information, and a second determination unit configured  
to determine the level of importance based on the level  
of tension.

          21. The communication support apparatus according  
to claim 19, wherein the living body information  
20 includes at least one of a breathing speed, a breathing  
depth, a pulse speed, a blood pressure, a blood sugar  
level, a body temperature, a skin potential, and a  
perspiration amount.

          22. The communication support apparatus according  
25 to claim 5, further comprising a communication  
unit configured to enable the apparatus to communicate  
with a translation device which translates

the source-language information into the corresponding language information, and wherein if the level of importance is determined to be higher than a threshold value, the communication unit is connected to the translation device to transmit the source-language information to the translation device and receive a translation result from the translation device.

23. The communication support apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the acquisition unit acquires the source-language information in a form of voice information, and includes a conversion unit configured to convert the voice information into text information.

24. The communication support apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the exhibit unit includes a conversion unit configured to convert the corresponding language information into voice information.

25. The communication support apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising:

a first storage which stores the source-language information;

a first reproduction unit configured to reproduce the source-language information;

a second storage which stores the corresponding language information;

a second reproduction unit configured to reproduce the corresponding language information;

an operation start unit configured to start



an operation of at least one of the first storage, the first reproduction unit, the second storage and the second reproduction unit, if the level of importance is higher than a threshold value.

5           26. The communication support apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the setting unit sets the accuracy of translation based on a level of emergency as the level of importance.

          27. A communication support method comprising:  
10           acquiring source-language information represented in a first language;  
          determining a level of importance of the source-language information;  
          translating the source-language information into  
15           corresponding language information represented in a second language;  
          exhibiting the corresponding language information;  
          setting, based on the level of importance, a process accuracy with which at least one of an  
20           acquisition process for acquiring the source-language information, a translation process for translating the source-language information into the corresponding language information, and an exhibit process for exhibiting the corresponding language information is  
25           performed; and  
          executing at least one of the acquisition process, the translation process and the exhibit process with

the process accuracy.

28. The communication support method according to claim 27, wherein setting the process accuracy includes setting, for the translation process, a high accuracy  
5 mode in which a high accuracy translation is performed, if the level of importance is higher than a threshold value, and a high speed mode in which a high speed translation is performed, if the level of importance is not higher than the certain threshold value.

10 29. The communication support method according to claim 27, further comprising communicating with a translation device which translates the source-language information into the corresponding language information, and wherein if the level of importance is  
15 determined to be higher than a threshold value, transmitting the source-language information to the translation device and receiving a translation result from the translation device.

20 30. A communication support program stored in a computer readable medium, comprising:

means for instructing a computer to acquire source-language information represented in a first language;

25 means for instructing the computer to determine a level of importance of the source-language information;

means for instructing the computer to translate the source-language information into corresponding

language information represented in a second language;

means for instructing the computer to exhibit the corresponding language information;

5 means for instructing the computer to set, based on the level of importance, a process accuracy with which at least one of an acquisition process to be carried out by the means for instructing the computer to determine the level, a translation process to be carried out by the means for instructing the computer  
10 to translate the source-language information, and an exhibit process to be carried out by the means for instructing the computer to exhibit the corresponding language information is performed; and

means for instructing the computer to execute at  
15 least one of the acquisition process, the translation process and the exhibit process with the process accuracy.

31. The communication support program according to claim 30, wherein the means for instructing the  
20 computer to set the process accuracy instructs the computer to set, for the translation process, a high accuracy mode in which a high accuracy translation is performed, if the level of importance is higher than a threshold value, and a high speed mode in which a high  
25 speed translation is performed, if the level of importance is not higher than the threshold value.

32. The communication support program according to

claim 30, further comprising means for instructing the  
computer to communicate with a translation device which  
translates the source-language information into the  
corresponding language information, and wherein if the  
5 level of importance is determined to be higher than a  
threshold value, the means for instructing the computer  
to communicate with the translation device is connected  
to the translation device to transmit the source-  
language information to the translation device and  
10 receive a translation result from the translation  
device.